



# Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

P.O. BOX 495

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

*Mary A. Glassman - First Selectman*

April 1, 2011

Sen. Eric D. Coleman / Rep. Gerald M. Fox

Re: H.B. 6557

Dear Sen. Coleman, Rep. Fox and Distinguished Members of the Judiciary Committee:

**On behalf of the Town of Simsbury, I write in support of H.B. 6557 which would restore recreational liability protection to municipalities.**

The bill would protect municipalities that offer free access to Town recreational lands while protecting the public by holding municipalities liable for willful or malicious failure to guard against, or warn against, a dangerous situation.

Restoring recreational liability protection to municipalities is particularly important to the Town of Simsbury which has nearly 6,600 acres of open space or 30 percent of the town's total 35 square miles dedicated to open space.

Since the court case of Manning vs. Barenz was overturned, towns in Connecticut have closed many recreational facilities and decided not to pursue open space purchases because of the concern of municipal liability. In addition, municipalities currently incur significant costs defending themselves against personal injury lawsuits.

It is also only fair that recreational liability protection be extended to municipalities because liability protection, such as what is being considered, is currently given to state-owned land. Protection is also afforded private, corporate, and utility company landowners who host recreational activities on their property without charging a fee. Towns and cities should be given the same protection such as currently in place in Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

Parks and open space contribute to the quality of life, as well as to local real estate values. Continued liability exposure will only cause municipalities to consider limiting recreational opportunities and to forgo future open space acquisitions.

I urge the legislature to restore the recreational liability protection to towns in Connecticut.

Sincerely,

*Mary A. Glassman*  
Mary A. Glassman

Cc: Board of Selectmen/Sen. Kevin Witkos/Rep. Linda Schofield

Telephone (860) 658-3230  
Facsimile (860) 658-9467

*Mglassman@simsbury-ct.gov*  
[www.simsbury-ct.gov](http://www.simsbury-ct.gov)

*An Equal Opportunity Employer*  
8:30 - 7:00 Monday  
8:30 - 4:30 Tuesday through Friday